

April 14, 2015

A regular meeting of the Council of the Town of Bedford, Virginia, was held in the Council Hall of the Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m., April 14, 2015.

Members present: Mayor Robert T Wandrei; Councilman Tim Black; Councilman Robert D. Carson; Councilman Stacey L. Hailey; Vice Mayor Steve C. Rush; Councilman Beckham A. Stanley; and Councilman James A. Vest

Members absent: None

Staff present: Town Manager Charles P. Kolakowski; Town Attorney W. W. Berry, IV; and Clerk of the Council Teresa W. Hatcher

Mayor Wandrei opened the meeting and led all present in saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Town Manager Kolakowski reported on the following:

- Later on the agenda is a request to block streets for a film crew – this came up late-Chief of Police Foreman has worked with everyone affected by the closing
- Reminder – Spring Cleanup will be held on April 18

Mayor Wandrei declared that the minutes of an adjourned Council meeting held on March 17, 2015, an adjourned Council meeting held on March 23, 2015, and a regular Council meeting held on March 24, 2015, were approved as distributed.

Vice Mayor Rush, Chairman of the Community Development Committee, reported that the committee met earlier in the evening and talked about possible things that might be going on in Town.

Mayor Wandrei explained the purpose of the Citizen Comments portion of the agenda.

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing at 7:04 p.m.

The Public Hearing Notice follows:

## **NOTICE**

### **Synopsis of Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016 Town of Bedford, Virginia**

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held by the Town Council Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Hall of the Town Municipal Building in relation to the budget for the Town of Bedford for Fiscal Year 2015-16, at which time any citizen of the Town shall have the right to attend and state his or her views. Detailed copies of the budget are available for inspection during normal office hours in the office of the Town Manager and the office of the Clerk of Council.

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Cindy Roberts, 4014 Avenel Avenue, asked Council to retain the money allotted in the proposed budget under Public Works line item “flag supplies.” Ms. Roberts said it was her understanding that this money will be used to replace the United State flags that have been displayed in the past from the lamp posts on Bridge Street and Main Street. Ms. Roberts asked that this line item be kept in the budget and all old flags be retired and replaced with fresh new ones starting this Memorial Day and make it a priority to retain funds in all future budgets for the maintenance and care of all of the United States flags on display in the Town of Bedford.

W. R. Stanley, Orange Street, commented that he felt the tax rate in the Town of Bedford is excessive and that Council owes it to the citizens to explain why the Town’s tax rate is so much higher than surrounding communities. He felt that cuts could be made.

Lisa Saunders, owner of Fisher’s Restaurant at 503 4<sup>th</sup> Street, spoke about the increase in taxes and electric rates. She asked what services the citizens and the businesses in the Town will gain from the tax increase.

As there were no more comments, the Mayor closed the Public Hearing at 7:12 p.m.

Under the Citizens Comments section of the agenda, Lee Walker, Bedford County Broadband Technical Advisory Committee, asked Council to make an appointment to the Committee. Mr. Walker explained that the County considers broadband to be infrastructure, just like water and electric.

Mayor Wandrei said the Committee will be advised when someone is appointed.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following item: God’s Compass LLC is requesting permission to film a movie scene on April 14 and 15, 2015, and to block the following streets from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on both days: block East Washington Street from Otey Street to South Bridge Street and Block South Street from Franklin Street to East Main Street. Town Council was requested to approve the closing of the above streets for the filming of a scene of God’s Compass from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. on April 14 and 15, 2015.

On motion by Councilman Hailey, seconded by Councilman Carson, voted upon and carried unanimously, the Consent Agenda was adopted.

Mayor Wandrei deferred agenda item “Proclamation – Mattie Morris-Johnson,” as she was not in attendance at the meeting.

The Mayor said the next item on the agenda was discussion of the proposed budget.

Councilman Vest read aloud the following statement:

Mayor Wandrei, members of Council. In two weeks we will vote on the Budget for FY 2015-2016. The proposed budget was presented to Council on March 10<sup>th</sup> with a proposed \$0.05 cent increase in our real estate tax and a 4% increase in our electric rate. Since that meeting both the Town

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Staff and Council have worked very hard to reduce the burden of additional taxes on our Town's Citizens.

After everyone's efforts we still have a proposed budget which has a \$0.02 cent tax increase on the real estate tax. We are currently proposing no increase on our electric rate. However, from Mr. Kolakowski's projections and the AMP electric meeting that Mr. Kolakowski, Vice Mayor Rush, Mr. Black and I attended in Salem on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will have to raise electric rates as early as this fall. During the current fiscal year FY 2014-2015 we increased the electric rates 6%.

The proposed FY 2015-2016 budget also calls for a \$2.00 increase in our solid waste service and a \$4.00 charge to activate curb side recycling.

With regard to the proposed real estate tax increase I feel like a "Voice in the Wilderness." It is not necessary to raise the real estate tax for FY 2015-2016.

With a planned retirement in the Police Dept., which in my opinion does not have to be filled, and doing away with the part-time parking enforcement officer, it will not be necessary to raise the Real Estate Tax.

My proposal does not prohibit the hiring of Police Officers for the current vacant positions.

Those who violate the down town parking time limits will continue to move their vehicles every two hours, as they have done in the past. What I would not want to see is a person visiting our downtown shops, get a parking ticket for shopping in downtown Bedford.

All of my concerns have been discussed with members of this council and in Joint Meetings with the Town Manager and Chief of Police.

This is a very difficult time for the Town of Bedford and its citizens. I cannot vote for a real estate tax increase when I do not believe it is justified.

Councilman Vest moved that Council have the Town Manager and his staff come back to Council with a budget that does not require a \$0.02 cent tax increase in the real estate rate. The motion was seconded by Councilman Stanley.

The Town Manager said a number of changes and adjustments have been made from the budget that was originally proposed.

Councilman Black expressed his concerns about the proposed budget: 1) almost \$500,000 is being spent in this budget from prior years reserves 2) we are building no contingency. Councilman Black gave some background information on some of pressures Council is feeling.

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Vice Mayor Rush spoke about the staffing in the Police Department. He said that the Town Manager appointed a very capable individual to manage the Police Department. The Vice Mayor said that one of his concerns is that with the lack of middle management, supervision is vicarious liability. Vice Mayor Rush said the Police Department is down six people. He said that is a public safety issue and is an officer safety issue. The Vice Mayor stated that the position of the new lieutenant is of utmost importance. He said that parking needs to be enforced.

Councilman Vest said that his proposal does not prohibit the hiring of the police officers that Council has talked about. He said that electric rates will have to be raised again and he feels the two cent increase in real estate taxes is not necessary.

Councilman Carson said he hates the fact that Council has to raise taxes as people who on a fixed income will suffer. Mr. Carson stated that when there was a time Council should have raised taxes gradually, taxes were not raised. Mr. Carson also said that he would like to know and be sure of in return for raising the taxes, what the citizens get.

The motion was then voted upon and carried by a roll call vote:

Councilman Black	aye
Councilman Carson	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Vice Mayor Rush	nay
Councilman Stanley	aye
Councilman Vest	aye
Mayor Wandrei	aye

The Mayor explained that the Town received proposals for curbside recycling by an outside vendor. After looking at the proposals, the suggestion was that the Town reinstitute curbside recycling. Mayor Wandrei said that when he looks at the figures proposed in the Solid Waste Budget, the budget goes up to almost \$200,000 to cover the cost of curbside recycling. The Mayor said that a new vehicle and carts would have to be purchased. Mayor Wandrei said he felt that the Town could not justify reinstituting curbside recycling. The Mayor suggested that Council consider deleting any reference to curbside recycling. He said that Council could keep the recycling at the Orange Street site. Mayor Wandrei stated that at the present time there is no market for mixed paper, plastic, or glass; however, the Town can take those items to the County landfill at no cost to the Town, if those items are segregated. He said that the Town could make money on taking the metal to Montvale and the cardboard to Madison Heights. The Mayor said it would be wise to put any money made into a landfill closing fund.

Mayor Wandrei moved that Council delete from the budget any expenditures for curbside recycling. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Rush.

A discussion ensued regarding the cost of reinstituting curbside recycling, the lack of revenue received by the Town, and the charge per residence per month if curbside recycling is reinstituted.

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Councilman Stanley moved that the matter be tabled for more discussion. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mayor Wandrei's motion was then voted upon and carried by the following roll call vote:

Councilman Carson	aye
Councilman Hailey	aye
Vice Mayor Rush	aye
Councilman Stanley	nay
Councilman Vest	nay
Councilman Black	aye
Mayor Wandrei	aye

Mayor Wandrei adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m. until April 20, 2015, at 6:00 p.m. for a discussion concerning electric utility operations.